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SUBJECT: TURKEY AND THE PKK: TERRORIST ATTACKS CONTINUE

REF: A. AFOSI DET 523 IZMIR TURKEY U-UEV-2410-021-05

[B](#). 2005 ISTANBUL 000383

[C](#). 2005 ANKARA 001340

[D](#). ANKARA 000671

[E](#). ANKARA 000723

Classified By: DCM Nancy McEldowney, for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

[1](#). (C) Summary: There have been several terrorist attacks over the past week in southeastern Turkey and in the Aegean city of Izmir. These attacks, which have resulted in several fatalities, are likely the first salvos of PKK/Kongra-Gel's expected, annual spring offensive. End Summary.

[2](#). (C) On March 9, a bomb went off in the eastern city of Van near the governor's office and/or a shopping center, according to various press reports. Three people were killed and 17 others were injured in the attack. The Turkish National Police (TNP) told us that all of the injured individuals were members of the local municipal police department who were riding together on a minibus. The deputy governor and police chief both stated publicly that the attack was probably conducted by a suicide bomber. Zaman newspaper reported on March 10 that the suicide bomber was a Syrian member of the PKK. Cumhuriyet newspaper -- which is not always reliable -- claimed on March 10 that the PKK has placed eleven suicide bombers in Turkey's biggest cities. PKK/Kongra-Gel has not traditionally employed suicide attacks as a routine part of its terrorist campaign; however, there have been attacks by apparent PKK suicide bombers in the past.

[3](#). (U) On March 2, a rocket attack on a military vehicle in Sirnak killed one soldier and wounded another.

[4](#). (S//NF) On March 4, a bomb exploded in the Aegean city of Izmir, wounding one man and damaging several buildings and vehicles, according to press. The attack occurred in Kadifekale, a Kurdish neighborhood, and appears to have been an attempt on a police station. The makeshift bomb, consisting of some C-4 and three propane tanks, was placed in a pushcart and rolled down a hill toward a police station (REF A). The C-4, but not the propane tanks, exploded before the bomb reached its target. The Kurdish Freedom Falcons (TAK), a group widely considered to be linked to the PKK/Kongra-Gel, later claimed responsibility for the attack.

[5](#). (U) On March 6, two Turkish policemen were killed and four were injured in an attack on their vehicle in the southeastern city of Batman, according to press reports. Turkish press reports blamed PKK/Kongra-Gel for the attacks.

¶6. (C) International Women's Day was marked by peaceful protests across Turkey on March 8. This year's protests stand in stark contrast with last year's events that were marred by television images of male police officer in Istanbul beating female protestors (Refs B and C).

¶7. (U) On March 9, five assailants assaulted the deputy mayor of the southeastern town of Batman. The deputy mayor was hospitalized after the attack and the assailants escaped, according to press.

¶8. (U) On March 10, two Turkish soldiers were wounded and five were injured in a PKK/Kongra-Gel ambush, according to press reports.

¶9. (C) Comment: Turkish authorities predict an increase in PKK/Kongra-Gel activity this spring as the mountain snows melt and the Kurdish New Year (March 21) approaches (Refs D and E). The PKK/Kongra-Gel terrorist insurgency has been largely focused on southeastern Turkey over the past twenty years, but TAK has claimed responsibility for dozens of attacks over the past few years in western Turkey, including Istanbul and coastal resort areas. The Turkish security forces are preparing for these attacks, but acknowledge that their ability to prevent them is limited. End Comment.

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